

claim the new light. But beside the popular acclaim D'Arcals's praise seemed insipid. Rome went wild. Mascagni's name was on every tongue. And within a week the young composer was the absorbing theme of conversation in every centre where people of culture gathered. The newspapers in America were as full of the theme as the newspapers in Europe.

Can you conceive what this must have meant to the youth from the village?

The man who is dragged suddenly and without warning from a deep cavern into the blazing sunshine could have been no more strangely affected.

"Come to Rome at once. The first prize has been awarded to you."

The telegraph brought this message early in the morning of May 18, 1890. At that very moment the Italian capital was ablaze with the young musician's name. In hut and palace there they were talking about him, wondering who he might be, sounding his praises to the sky. But in Cerignola, where Mascagni lived, nothing had yet been heard that day of the great Roman triumph, and Mascagni had arisen in a gloomy enough spirit.

Picture his amazement, his ecstasy, his bewilderment, for he had not even known that his composition had been submitted for the prize.

Ten months before he had seen an advertisement in the village newspaper soliciting compositions for the prize. They were to be confined to one-act operas by composers who theretofore had had no production presented on the stage. Scogono, the publisher, of Milan, offered the prize with Government backing. In a spirit of forlorn hope Mascagni decided to enter the competition. Young though he was, he had met with so much failure and discouragement that his nervous, ambitious, high-strung temperament was almost crushed. Half hesitating, misdoubting his own ability, he began the task. His wife, a fine, simple character, urged him on. Again and again he threw the sheets aside.

"Why should I?" he asked the young wife. "Surely I can never win. It will be only another disappointment."

"No, Pietro, it will be success. You will win."

And he went to his score again, half unwilling. In six weeks the task was finally finished. The music was written around a drama by Verga, adapted for operatic purposes by two young friends of Mascagni—Targioni-Tozzetti and Menardi.

The last note set down, Mascagni was more than ever in doubt and trouble. Why should he win, when the best musical talent in young Italy was entered in the competition? This was his incessant strain.

"But you can try," urged his wife. "Now that it is all done it would be folly not to send it in. Come, give it to me; I will forward it."

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the impetuous composer. "I have suffered enough from hoping for acclaim. I would but eat my heart out with waiting, and then die of disappointment."

"Pietro, let me send it," pleaded Signora Mascagni.

"No. Here, I will send it where it will not trouble me more."

With that he threw the manuscript in the fireplace and ran from the room.

The Mascagnis at that time lived on three francs or less a day. To this fact is due the existence of "Cavalleria Rusticana" and the present fame of Mascagni.

How?

On three francs a day one must be very sparing of fuel. Hence the fire into which Mascagni moodily threw his manuscript was a very poor affair. The sheets were not even scorched before Signora Mascagni had pounced upon them and pulled them out. To her the music had sounded superb. True, she had only heard it on a cracked, old fiddle, the only musical instrument the household boasted; but even with this poor instrumentation she had been carried away by it.

"It is because you are no judge, because your love for me blinds you," declared the composer, fighting down her praise.

"But I am a judge," protested the good woman. "Remember, I sang on the stage for years the works of masters."

"Then it is because you love me that you find it worthy."

Thus it went from day to day until the manuscript was thrown into the fire and rescued by the wife.

"I determined to burden him no more," wrote the Signora afterward in telling of the wanderings of the manuscript. "He should think the composition destroyed. This would take the load of waiting from his mind, and I would send it in, unknown to him, in his name."

Mascagni returned to his band, to his teaching, to his organ in the village church, where he was employed as director of the choir. To him, therefore, the telegram announcing him as a prize winner came as a stupendous surprise. He could hardly believe his senses. His wife could explain with difficulty. But finally he grasped the full meaning of his great fortune—that is, he grasped it as well as he could in the rustic isolation in which he had lived. It was not for a week or more afterward that he really comprehended what had come to him. For the moment it meant only the prize money—two thousand lire, \$400.

"I can buy my wife a new dress," was his first joyful exclamation when he got to Rome and reached the theatre where the opera had been put on.

That night he was brought face to face with the great world. The theatre was packed from pit to dome with a wildly enthusiastic crowd of people, who demanded to see the composer of the opera that had caused such a sensation. Mascagni was led out from the wings. He trembled with nervousness and excitement. He stood there, a true figure of genius; a small, slender, boyish look-

ing chap, pale to ghastliness with stage fright. He had a fine head and face, but looked almost ludicrous, for he had come from his country home in a suit made by the village tailor a long time before for a price that suited a poor, young musician's pocket.

But such a storm as greeted this figure! Few men have stood before it. Seconds passed into minutes, minutes almost into hours, before it was over. It died down, and then broke forth again. It rumbled and reverberated through the house and found an echo in the streets, packed with people almost as solidly as the theatre itself.

Almost any man's head would have been turned with it all. But Mascagni is a genius, a master, and in nothing did he show this as well as the manner in which he took success. It left him as simple, as modest, as amiable and lovable as his old life of poverty and obscurity. True, he was fearfully excited, but in this he had a sheet anchor in his wife.

"Leave everything. Come to me at once. I need you," he telegraphed. No genius, nor even a beauty; simply a good, loving, quiet, sensible, country girl, whom even the Italian stage could not spoil, Signora Mascagni came to her husband's aid, acting as guard to his volatile temperament. With her he found refuge from the whirl that set in. He was overwhelmed with social attentions. His days, and even his nights were crowded with men and women from every walk of life, who craved an acquaintance.

Success had come to the master in a night. He was the hero of Rome, a blazing figure in the world.

So wonderful was the music he had given the world that the critics declared he could certainly never surpass it, probably never equal it. He had written his "masterpiece" first, they said. But he soon proved them false prophets. "L'Amico Fritz," produced the following year, is considered by many to be superior to "Cavalleria Rusticana," and "I Rautzan" was better still, while his new opera, "Iris," is said to be finer than all the others. It is to be produced here next season, and, it is promised, will create even a greater furor than "Cavalleria Rusticana."

The music he has written for the Journal's Easter anthem is in his best

vein, and is certain to meet with an enthusiastic reception in America. It is the first time the famous composer has written directly for an American audience, and he was particularly anxious to present himself in the highest style of his heart before a people for whose greatness he has the utmost veneration and respect.

His heart is naturally with the American Republic, for Mascagni is a son of the people. His father is a baker in Leghorn, where the composer was born, December 5, 1863. The Leghorn baker was ambitious for his son.

"You shall not spend your days at the bake trough, like your old father," he said to Pietro. "You shall be a lawyer."

Pietro thought this very fine—until he happened to hear a piano, or a hand organ, or a pipe, or whatever it was that first woke the music in his soul. Then he would have none of the lawyers.

"I will be a musician, father," he told the baker.

"A musician! you young rascal," shouted that good man, much outraged. "A miserable vagabond who scarce makes two livres a day? Never. You shall learn the law and be a great man."

Pietro was wise and said nothing. But, unknown to his father, he attended what has since become the Cherubin School of Music under Soffredine, an institution almost as famous in Italy as Mascagni himself. Of course the baker learned of his son's "waste of time" at the music school after a while, and then there was a fine row. Pietro asked his master to intercede for him, and Soffredine was only too glad to do so, for he recognized the musician's genius in the lad. For a long time the good baker was obdurate. Finally, however, he yielded so far that he consented to a continuation of the studies at the school, with the distinct understanding, however, that this was to be a mere diversion, nothing serious.

"For," he reiterated, "Pietro shall be a lawyer, a great man," which shows that even in Leghorn they have some absurd notions. Papa Mascagni, in order that the thing might be done properly, even went so far as to buy a piano, to the great distress of his neighbors. It was a weather-beaten piano, that cost \$14, and when Pietro, with all the ardor and enthusiasm of genius, worked at his "finger exercises" on it, the result, from all accounts, was of a character to drive most men mad. Fortunately for the neighbors, this state of affairs did not last very long. Soffredine, fearing that the baker might, despite all opposition, make a lawyer of Pietro, induced the latter's uncle, Stefano Mascagni, to step in. The uncle, brother to the baker, was well-to-do, and on the understanding that he would look out for the boy's future, he was permitted to take charge of Pietro, who was then thirteen years old.

"Heaven came," as Mascagni himself has said. He was installed at his uncle's house in two rooms. He had a fine piano, and nothing to do but study music under the direction of his loved master, whose services the composer never forgets to extol. For his uncle Pietro conceived a passionate devotion and gratitude. After the great triumph of "Cavalleria" he voiced these sentiments:

"Oh, my uncle, how I bless your memory, now more than ever!" he said. "Who can express the joy and happiness I experienced in those small but comfortable quarters in which you placed me. How many visions did I have within these walls! How often, seated there, have I seen the path of the future before me, straight, wide and strewn with roses."



MADAME MASCAGNI.